



Bright Futures: Family Matters

Volume 13, Issue 1

May 2012

THE COMMUNITY: GOOD HEALTH BEGINS WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN, WORK, AND PLAY!

We hear good health messages all the time: “Eat healthy foods!” “Get more exercise!” “Have regular health checkups!” “Keep your children safe!” “Get help when you need it!” Have you ever thought about how much being able to follow many of the good health messages depends on what is available in your own community? Did you know that the people who live in some zip codes are healthier, on average, than others? What makes the difference? What can you do to improve the health of your community and therefore your family?



County Health Rankings

The third annual County Health Rankings report was recently released by the University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Go to www.countyhealthrankings.org and click on your state to bring up a county-by-county health ranking.

How did these researchers come up with these scores? First they recognize that health—at both the individual and at the community levels—is a product of many factors, some more obvious than others:

- **Health behaviors:** These are activities that promote good health or interfere with it, such as diet, physical activity, alcohol use, sexual activity (including teen births and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tobacco use.
- **Clinical care:** People in healthy communities have access to quality health care. This includes emergency and disease care, but also, care designed to prevent illness.
- **Social and economic factors:** Education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety all have an impact on our health. To see how these affect health, go to www.countyhealthcalculator.org/
- **Physical environment:** How clean is your air and water? Does your community have parks, community gardens, supermarkets and farmers markets, bicycle paths and walkable streets?



All of these factors work together to help determine how long you live—and the quality of life you enjoy along the way. You can make a difference in your community!

“Much of what influences our health happens outside the doctor’s office—in our schools, workplaces and neighborhoods.

Low education rates and inadequate income translate directly into premature death, more disease, and more money spent treating avoidable illnesses.”

www.countyhealthcalculator.org

IN THIS ISSUE

Community: |
Where
Health
Begins

Resources 2
for Families
How Does 2
Your
Community
Stack up?



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Bright Futures Family Theme Sheet: Community Relations and Resources

Want more tips to make your community healthier? Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/communityrelationsandresources>

Eagle Books Diabetes Public Health Resources

These resources are designed by the CDC Division of Diabetes Translation's Native Diabetes Wellness Program. You'll find children's books to help Native American children learn about diabetes. You'll also find tips for hosting a community health event: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/eagle/index.html



Family Voices Mission

Family Voices aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities.

Through our national network, we provide families tools to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care.

www.familyvoices.org

POP QUIZ: HOW DOES YOUR COMMUNITY STACK UP?*

Man-made features like schools, homes, roads, and neighborhood design have an enormous impact on kid's health. How healthy is your community?

Do kids in your community—including those with special health care needs or disabilities—get enough exercise?

1. Can they safely walk or bike to school?
2. Do they have opportunities to be physically active at school?
3. Do they have ample safe, clean places to play, e.g., parks, community center?



Do kids in your community eat a healthy diet?

4. Do they have access to healthy food at school?
5. Are there many fast food restaurants close to schools in your community?
6. Is there a nearby grocery store that sells affordable, fresh foods?

Do kids in your community breathe fresh air?

7. Does your community have bans on smoking in public places?
8. Can people in your community run errands without a car?
9. Is your community free of major air pollution sources (industry or high car traffic)?

Do kids in your community get the health care they need?

10. Is there an affordable, accessible health care facility in your community?
11. Is there a local pharmacy in your community?

Are kids in your community safe from exposure to lead and mold?

12. Are kids safe from exposure to harmful levels of lead at school?
13. Are kids safe from exposure to harmful levels of mold at school?
14. Are kids safe from exposure to harmful levels of lead at home?
15. Are kids safe from exposure to harmful levels of mold at home?

My Community Didn't Score Very Well—Now What?



If you answered more questions with “no” than you’d like, there are things you can do. You aren’t the only person in your community who cares about good health! Talk to other parents, your child’s teachers and health care providers, and others in your community. Attend a city council meeting and ask for 5 minutes to state your concerns—and your ideas for improvement. Start with a small project and go from there!

*This quiz is based on a report from the American Public Health Association, *Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids*.

With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. Share **Bright Futures: Family Matters** with your networks.

Visit www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org.

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